



Diabetes Risk Factors: Do You Know Yours?

By the [National Diabetes Education Program](#)

If you learned that you were at risk to develop a serious, chronic disease that can have life-threatening complications, and had the chance to turn back the clock, would you?

That's the question for an estimated 79 million Americans who are at risk for type 2 diabetes, a disease that can be prevented or delayed. The first step to turn back the clock is knowing the risk factors for diabetes. Although some risk factors, like having a family history of diabetes or being over the age of 45 can't be changed, there are important lifestyle factors that you *can* change, such as being more physically active and losing some weight if you are overweight.

About one out of four people with diabetes have the disease and don't even know it. That's nearly seven million Americans. Another estimated 79 million Americans have pre-diabetes, a condition where blood glucose (blood sugar) levels are higher than normal, but not high enough for a diagnosis of diabetes. If left undiagnosed or untreated, diabetes can lead to serious health problems such as heart disease, stroke, blindness, kidney disease, amputation, and even death.

A recent survey by the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) showed that while many Americans are aware of diabetes risk factors, such as being overweight and physically inactive, there is still a disconnect between being aware of diabetes risk, and understanding what that risk means to them. When it comes to understanding their personal risk for diabetes, it appears as if family history of diabetes is really what makes people take notice.

Does Diabetes Run In Your Family?

Many people who get type 2 diabetes have one or more family members with the disease. If you have a family history of diabetes, the good news is you can take small steps to delay or prevent type 2 diabetes. Research has shown that people at high risk can prevent or delay the onset of the disease by losing just 5 to 7 percent of their weight, which means 10 to 14 pounds for a person weighing 200 pounds. Two keys to success:

- Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity a day, at least 5 days a week
- Eat a variety of foods that are low in fat and reduce the number of calories you eat each day.

To learn if you are at risk of diabetes, take the [Diabetes Risk Test](#) at www.YourDiabetesInfo.org. If you have a family history of diabetes, order a free copy of [Your Game Plan to Prevent Type 2 Diabetes](#) and talk to your doctor at your next visit to learn more about diabetes and what you can do to turn back the clock on diabetes. The three-booklet packet includes a food and activity tracker and a fat and calorie counter. The packet can be viewed online or ordered for free by calling 1-888-693-NDEP (1-888-693-6337), TTY: 1-866-569-1162.

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